

Testimony from Allison Messier

Good afternoon, Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Allison Messier and I come before you to express my **opposition** to the proposed budget reductions in the Governor's budget for the Community Colleges. I began my studies at Naugatuck Valley Community College in 2007 with the hope of graduating with a degree of Science in Nursing. Academics had never come easy for me and it was 20 years since I had taken a course. I was terrified I would fail. The courses I took were engaging, the professors were inspiring and the services that I needed were there to help me accomplish my goals and succeed in taking all of the pre-requisites necessary to apply and be accepted into the NVCC Nursing Program. Without the community college system in CT, I would not have had the opportunity to pursue a degree, nor would I be graduating this May. Becoming educated has changed me; I've grown, become a critical thinker, become interested in my community and the world around me. I have encouraged my four children to set high goals and I now know that they can truly accomplish anything if they are willing to work hard and pursue their education. I used to think that I would never have a degree, that it was simply not possible. I know now, because of the encouragement and guidance I've received at NVCC, that I will not only have an Associates degree in Nursing but I will also be pursuing my BSN and MSN in another CT institution of higher learning and all while I'll be working in a CT hospital as a registered nurse caring for CT residents.

I implore the legislature **not to** approve a reduced budget for the Community Colleges. My future and the future of many other students depend on having access to an affordable and quality education that prepares us for the workforce so we can contribute to the economic well being of Connecticut. I thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am available to answer any questions.